

# HUNTING DOGS

BY  
BERT COBB





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BY BERT COBB



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*by*

BERT COBB



*With an article by*

FREEMAN LLOYD

NEW  YORK  
THE CRAFTON COLLECTION, INC.

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# HUNTING DOGS

by

BERT COBB

AS a writer on Hounds and Dogs for nearly half a century, I am often asked about the fountain heads,—the old and ancient sources of information from which I gather strange or uncommon particulars regarding the hunting dogs of our forefathers. The reply is: “Mostly from old paintings and prints in which are depicted hunting scenes and hunting dogs.” The man acquainted with sport in the various phases in which hounds or dogs are employed, at once knows whether the pictorial subjects, as they apply to hunting, are properly treated or otherwise, for sport is to the sportsman what dress and fashions are to the woman of the world. If there is a serious error in the sporting print, the sportsman discards it; he doesn’t like to see the picture on his wall, for the very justifiable reason that someone or other acquainted with sport might drop in and point out the very discrepancy the owner had discovered. So the sporting picture that is a “sport” is hidden away; it is only shown to bosom friends, just for the sake of making fun of the mistaken or badly informed artist’s work.

A case in point: Only the other day I ordered a copy made from a celebrated Bulldog canvas by a noted artist. Imagine my surprise when I saw that the copyist had painted protruding teeth on to the lower jaw of the creature! Asked

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for an explanation, the artist said that two of his friends who really knew all about bulldogs, had called and declared that "no bulldog ever lived that didn't show his teeth!"

And so it happens that some artists as well as writers crib and copy from the works of others. In the National Gallery, in London, and public institutions in America, many canvases of the old masters are given prominence in which dogs' knees are placed where the knee joints of horses are to be found; and, horror of horrors, students are to be seen copying these pictures. Thus is confusion worse confounded.

In the instance of Bert Cobb, these frightful errors cannot be committed, for the reason his sketches of hounds and dogs are made from life. It can be written that his work attracted immediate attention on the most critical of all occasions—the holding of one of those enormous dog shows in Madison Square Garden, New York City. For three days, the Cobb dry points were surrounded by men and women who naturally would be hard to please in the manner in which dogs are pictured. It was noticed that collectors immediately made purchases—a sure sign that the portraits were pleasing to that class of men and women who look upon dogs as the highest form of animal life. Every little "point" or characteristic of some particular breed of dog is looked for. If the oddity (as it would appear to the lay eye) is not given in the picture, the keen observer passes on. In other words, he is not interested.

The make or shape of a dog's head, is the index to his

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breed. Several breeds of hunting dogs have the same forms of necks, bodies, legs, feet, coats, tails. But the head of each and everyone is different. All of these heads have been developed by breeders of experience—sportsmen who have known what the hunting dog requires. The scenting powers and brains of these dogs function at the same time; indeed, the sight of the hunting dog (save in the coursing breeds) is in no way so important as the nose or olfactory powers of the hound, pointer, setter, spaniel. The broader the skull the greater the scenting capabilities; the heavy fore-part of the head from the eyes to the nostrils, is not so important as the width or general capacity of the brain-holding skull. Wolves and foxes have narrow fore-faces; but their skulls are large. These are among the best scenting of the wild animal world.

So it is that Mr. Cobb has preferred to here give us the heads of hunting dogs. These presentments surely will meet with favor and be of very great value to those who come after us. Our descendents will find themselves face to face with the portraits of bench show and field trial prize hunting dogs of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Photographs fade; but dry points remain rich and rare—a never ending delight for the young and old of all generations.

If I were asked to make a choice from Mr. Cobb's works in this portfolio, I would be inclined to choose that of the Cocker Spaniels, *Lothario and My Own Desire*—an astoundingly faithful picture that actually conveys to the mind, not only true portraits of Mr. and Mrs. L'Hommedieu's dogs, but the unmistakable characteristics of the

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Cocker Spaniel—as a breed and—what is more—its lovely temperament. Who would be afraid to pat the heads of such spaniel dogs? No one! Sagacity, kindness, evenness of disposition and thought are portrayed to the life — true evidences of the worth of our artist who, like Landseer, makes his dogs speak to us.

I have been a collector for many years, and am particularly interested in spaniels. Therefore, I have no hesitation in saying that Cobb's head of the Cocker Spaniel, *Lothario*, is the best specimen of artistic work I have seen. This print should live forever.

As I write, there is before me a copy of Londerseel's spaniel of the year 1586. Six inches away is Mr. Cobb's dry point of cocker spaniels. What is more, the medieval and modern are of exactly the same breed of dog, with the same "points" or like individuality. To all intents and purposes they are just similar dogs — albeit three hundred and fifty years have as good as passed. And so we take further pride in the spaniel breed.

I would call attention to Mr. Thomas' American Foxhounds of the Old Virginia strain; Mr. Tefft's Basset Hounds and Mr. Hoagland's Pointers. I refer to the head studies. The picture of the high quality Dapple Joe (pointer) is admirable. It is a scenting head — a pointer's stock in trade, bred into his kind for the express purpose of scenting feathered game. From only the limning of the foreface, skull and neck of this pointer, a trained eye may imagine and gauge all of the rest of the dog's "points." In short, Dapple Joe is or was a quality dog—finely made,

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speedy, rather than of the cloddier and consequently slower stamp not so greatly esteemed by the practical sportsman.

Another dry point that will be well received is that of the American Foxhounds, *Bowler and Rachel* — that of the latter particularly. It is undoubtedly a true portrait; for no artist could “imagine” such a beautiful creature. The type of the American Foxhound favors the French rather than the Modern English kind. And this peculiarity about the old fashioned American hound has its interesting side!

When General Lafayette paid his second visit to this country, he brought a pack of French hounds as a present for George Washington, a devotee of the Chase. These hounds were used for hunting elk and deer in Virginia. At that time there were no red foxes in that part of America. English hounds had already been imported by the Fairfaxes for whom the First President had been a surveyor. A branch of the Fairfax family still resides at Belvoir House, Farquier County, Virginia, and the cult of hounds and the science of hunting remain as in Washington’s time. And so it is Mr. Cobb’s dry points will appeal to dyed-in-the-wool sportsmen as well as all lovers of dogs.

Yes—Mr. Cobb’s portrayals of the heads of hunting dogs must remain as interesting for the morrow as they certainly are today. These drypoints will be of much concern to writers of kennel histories—the tomes of a yet undreamed of period.

FREEMAN LLOYD

OSCAWANA-ON-HUDSON, N. Y.  
*February, 1931*

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# PATRONAGE

MR. S. Y. L'HOMMEDIEU

MRS. DAVID WAGSTAFF

MRS. DONALD CARR

MR. JOSEPH B. THOMAS

MR. RAYMOND HOAGLAND JR.

MR. ERASTUS TEFFT

MR. JACOB FRANCE

MR. LOUIS LEE HAGGIN

MR. CHARLES E. MATHER

MR. JOHN W. MACKAY

MR. GERALD M. LIVINGSTON

WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF  
THE ARTIST

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# DESCRIPTION of PLATES

I. LOTHARIO AND MY OWN DESIRE (Size  $9\frac{3}{4}$  x 12 ins.) Famous Champion Cocker Spaniels; owned by Mrs. S. Y. L'Hommedieu, Jr., Morristown, N. J.

II. SHEILA OF DARNICK (Size  $9\frac{3}{4}$  x  $11\frac{3}{4}$  ins.) International Champion Springer Spaniel; owned by Mrs. David Wagstaff, Tuxedo Park, N. Y.

III. PHILIP'S CHIEF ( $9\frac{3}{4}$  x 12 ins.) International Champion Pointer; Famous Field Trial Winner; owned by Mr. Raymond Hoagland, Jr.

IV. DUTCHESS (Size  $9\frac{7}{8}$  x  $11\frac{7}{8}$  ins.) Springer Spaniel; owned by Mr. John W. Mackay, Roslyn, L. I.

V. RUNT AND PIPPIN (Size  $10\frac{7}{8}$  x  $12\frac{1}{2}$  ins.) Champion Basset Hounds; owned by Mr. Erastus T. Tefft, M. F. H., Brewster, N. Y.

VI. BEAU LAVERACK (Size  $10\frac{7}{8}$  x 12 ins.) Champion English Setter; Bench and Field Trial Winner; owned by Mr. Raymond Hoagland, Jr.

VII. DAPPLE JOE (Size  $9\frac{3}{4}$  x 12 ins.) Champion Pointer, for many years considered the outstanding Pointer in the country; owned by Mr. Raymond Hoagland, Jr.

VIII. BOWLER AND RACHEL (Size  $9\frac{3}{4}$  x  $11\frac{3}{4}$  ins.) Virginia Fox Hounds; owned by Mr. Joseph B. Thomas, author of "Hounds and Hunting Through the Ages" partly illustrated by Bert Cobb.

IX. FOX HOUNDS (Size  $14\frac{7}{8}$  x  $9\frac{1}{2}$  ins.) Three Hounds from the famous Hunting Hill Pack of Culpepper Court House in Virginia.

X. CORSAIR OF LEAM AND HORSFORD HIDDEN (Size  $14\frac{7}{8}$  x  $9\frac{3}{4}$  ins.) Springer Spaniels; Horsford, well known Field Trial Winner and twice winner of International Horsford Cup for Gun Work; Corsair, famous dog character in the book "Bob, the Spaniel" by B. S. Wagstaff; both owned by Mrs. Donald Carr (Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff) of Mt. Kisco, N. Y.

XI. McTYRE (Size  $11\frac{7}{8}$  x  $9\frac{3}{4}$  ins.) Champion Pointer; Famous Field Trial Winner; owned by Mr. Jacob France, Baltimore, Md.

XII. BECKY BROOMHILL (Size  $15\frac{3}{4}$  x  $9\frac{3}{4}$  ins.) Champion Pointer; Famous Field Trial Winner; owned by Mr. Louis Lee Haggin, Louisville, Ky.

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*Sheila of Darnick*

*Portlough-*







*Phieps Chief*

*L. J. San-*









Duchess

Porter & Co.  
1880







Beau Larrick

Beau Larrick





Barney Joe

H. H. H.











*Taxidermied*

*Portia*





1876

Monday 31 January







Perlon-

11-11-11





Peris -

Baby Brown Hill











